R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 019 157 RC 001 207

THE RURAL SCHOOL DROPOUT, A TEN-YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF EASTERN KENTUCKY YOUTH.

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PUB DATE SEP 63

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.40 33P

DESCRIPTORS- ASPIRATION, *ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOR STANDARDS, DROPOUT ATTITUDES, *EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGEMENT, *EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, *GRADUATE SURVEYS, HIGH SCHOOLS, OCCUPATIONS, *RURAL DROPOUTS, STATISTICAL DATA, TERMINAL EDUCATION, URBAN IMMIGRATION, BUREAU OF SCHOOL SERVICE, KENTUCKY, OHIO, DEP. OF AGRICULTURE,

A SURVEY OF SCHOOL DROPOUTS IN 11 EASTERN KENTUCKY COUNTIES WAS DESIGNED TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS--(1) TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE RURAL SCHOOL DROPOUT DISADVANTAGED IN COMPARISON WITH THE RURAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE? (2) IS GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL AN ADVANTAGE IF THE YOUTH REMAINS IN A RURAL AREA? (3) IS IT AN ADVANTAGE IF HE MOVES TO AN URBAN CENTER? THE CONCLUSIONS WERE DETERMINED BY TWO TYPES OF COMPARISONS--(1) SCHOOL DROPOUTS IN THE RURAL AREA WERE COMPARED WITH THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES LIVING IN THAT AREA, AND (2) SCHOOL DROPOUTS WHO MOVED TO URBAN CENTERS IN SOUTHERN OHIO WERE COMPARED WITH THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO MOVED TO THOSE CENTERS. THE SURVEY CONCLUDES THAT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES HAD BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN, HELD HIGHER ASPIRATIONS THAN, AND POSSESSED A MORE OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE THAN RURAL DROPOUTS. THIS ARTICLE APPEARS IN THE "BULLETIN OF THE BUREAU OF SCHOOL SERVICE," VOL. 36, NO.1, SEPTEMBER 1963. (CL)

ED 019157

THE RURAL SCHOOL DROPOUT

RECEIVED MAY 15 1967 NMSU E.R.I.C.

A Ten-Year Follow-Up Study Of Eastern Kentucky Youth

E. GRANT YOUMANS

RC 001 207

Vol. XXXVI September 1963 Number 1
BULLETIN OF THE BUREAU OF SCHOOL SERVICE
College of Education University of Kentucky Lexington

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***Editor's Note*:**

"The pendulum swings in American education" is a common expression. This expression may be observed to have some validity—i.e., the "swing" to emphasis upon the gifted students and the "solid" subjects since Sputnik.

It seems more accurate to say, however, that *pendulums swing*, for almost immediately after Sputnik there has also appeared wide-spread concern for the disadvantaged student—as illustrated by another pendulum of emphasis upon the dropout problem. This balancing of emphasis is heartening to those who have maintained all along that the American school is equally committed to serving all children and youth without favor.

The study reported here reinforces much of the information we already have on the dropout, though it provides some minor contradictions of (or fails to support) some of it. More than most studies of dropouts, however, this one prys into the attitudes of the dropout toward society and his place in it. Also, it deals with the rural rather than predominantly urban dropout.

It was not the part of this study to offer solutions, but it does raise sharp questions—assuming that we are concerned with persons for their own value. It reveals that, comparatively, the dropout views the future with pessimism and his fellows with little faith that they will support him in his times of trial. The fact that such a finding "begs the question"—that leaving school early is in itself an evidence of such attitudes—does not obviate the value of the information to people of responsibility in school and community, to say nothing of those who simply hold that each individual is of unique importance. We join Dr. Youmans in his suggestion that the dropout problem should be viewed in the context of *personal* as well as *community* and *economic* values.

The Bureau is concerned for both the gifted and the disadvantaged. We hope these two emphases may never be dropped. It seems in order now to suggest, however, that perhaps we should also become excited about the great group of students who constitute the "middle" in our schools—without, of course, discarding any of our concern for these two important extremes, the gifted and the disadvantaged.

Entered as second-class matter October 24, 1928, at the post office at Lexington, Kentucky, under the Act of August 24, 1912. Published quarterly by the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky. Price $1, postpaid.

The Rural School Dropout

A Ten-Year Follow-Up Study of Eastern Kentucky Youth

RECEIVED
SEP 17 1963

by

E. Grant Youmans

EXECUTIVE
PHI DELTA KAPPA

VOL. XXXVI SEPTEMBER 1963 NUMBER 1
BULLETIN OF THE BUREAU OF SCHOOL SERVICE
College of Education, University of Kentucky, Lexington

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Recent events have focused public attention sharply on the role of public education in American society. Are young persons in the United States being adequately trained, educated, and oriented to assume responsibility for the essential tasks of society? American society is undergoing rapid change, and public policy for developing the potentialities of youth must be continually re-examined in the light of empirical data. The following report supplies information about a segment of American youth—a segment who grew up and obtained their formal education in the economically depressed rural Southern Appalachian Region. Many of the young men moved to urban centers, and this report compares their achievements and fortunes with those of the young men who remained in their native environment. The findings and implications reported should be useful to organizations and persons within and outside the State of Kentucky concerned with the development of American youth.

This is one of several reports on a survey made jointly by the Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Kentucky, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It is a contributing study to the Southern Regional Rural Sociological Research Project S-44. Reports on other phases of the project have been submitted for publication in the Bulletin and Progress Report series of the University of Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station.

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SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

In 1950, a total of 757 boys were enrolled in the eighth grade of the public schools in eleven Eastern Kentucky counties. In 1960, 307 of these youths (average age 25) were interviewed. More than half the respondents had dropped out of school before completing the twelfth grade and, among these, the larger proportion had received only eight years of formal education. Half the respondents were living in rural Eastern Kentucky and half had moved to urban centers of southern Ohio or other parts of Kentucky. Assessment is made of the work life, the community life, and the perspectives and values of the men. School dropouts in Eastern Kentucky are compared with high school graduates living in that area, and school dropouts who moved to urban centers are compared with high school graduates who moved to those centers.

Summary

Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, high school graduates, in contrast to school dropouts, had been more successful in achieving the higher status jobs, held higher job aspirations, expressed stronger intentions to do something to achieve their aspirations, participated more often in community organizations, and held a more optimistic mental outlook about the world and their place in it. In contrast, more of the school dropouts than of the high school graduates living in Eastern Kentucky indicated that they would do things differently if they could start life over. The principal change they wanted was to get more formal education.

Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, no significant differences were found between school dropouts and high school graduates in satisfaction with their work, desire to change jobs, achievement orientation, rates of unemployment, annual income, ratings of their communities, migration intentions, reasons for wanting to move, or in their estimation of how much formal education a young man needs nowadays.

Among the men who had moved to urban centers, school dropouts differed significantly from high school graduates in only three comparisons. High school graduates, compared with school dropouts in the urban centers, had a more confident and optimistic outlook on the world, and substantially more of the high school graduates than of the school dropouts who had moved to urban centers maintained that a college education was needed by young men today. More of the school dropouts than of the high school

graduates in the urban centers said they would do things differently if they could start life over, and the principal change would be to get more formal education.

No significant differences were found between the school dropouts and the high school graduates who had moved to urban centers in: occupational achievements, job satisfactions, the wish to change jobs, achievement orientation, job aspirations, motivation to achieve their aspirations, rates of unemployment, annual income, membership in community organizations, ratings of their communities, migration intentions, or in their reasons for wanting to move.

Implications

In assessing the implications of this research, several important characteristics of the data should be kept in mind: (1) The study evaluates the experience of young men from a distinctive environment—that of Eastern Kentucky. (2) At the time of the follow-up interviews, the young men were at an early stage in their occupational careers, and their occupations in 1960 may be different from those at a later date. (3) Follow-up interviews were limited to young men residing in Eastern Kentucky and to those living in urban centers in southern Ohio and elsewhere in Kentucky in 1960.

In addition, two general trends should be kept in mind: (1) There has been a decline in agricultural employment. (2) Many nonagricultural occupations require increasing levels of education and special training.

The data show that half of the young men educated in Eastern Kentucky had left their home environment. Among those living in the Eastern Kentucky area, completion of high school was associated with employment in higher status occupations. Among those living in urban centers, however, both graduates and school dropouts were concentrated in the more readily available semiskilled jobs, and there was no over-all relationship between completion of high school and employment in higher status occupations. Whether graduates will experience higher rates of advancement than dropouts in the future cannot be answered from the data available.

A reasonable inference from these data is that the rural school system of Eastern Kentucky appears able to prepare young men for adult roles in rural areas, but that it is not so well equipped to prepare rural youth for employment in urban areas. It may be

that educational standards in rural areas are below those in urban areas and that rural youth bring the culture of rural life with them, which may affect adversely their early achievement in urban areas.

The men in this study held common values of American society about career achievement. However, there appear to be some contradictions between their achievement orientation and the translation of these values into actual job aspirations. Only modest proportions of the men aspired to jobs of higher status than their present job levels. Perhaps they lacked knowledge about the jobs which could provide the means of improving their level of living. Perhaps many lacked the motivation to plan and make an effort to advance themselves. Perhaps many of the men had reached a stable point in their careers and were content with their job achievements.

The fact that a substantial number of young men in urban centers said they wanted to return to rural Kentucky suggests questions about their preparation for urban living. Many of the young men, no doubt, left rural Kentucky to live with relatives in urban centers. This provided a cushion to facilitate adjustment to a new way of life. However, it appears that the convenience of relatives is not an entirely adequate means to guarantee satisfactory adaptation. Perhaps the public schools in rural areas can direct more attention to orienting rural youth for living in urban communities. Many rural youth will continue to migrate to urban centers, and more adequate preparation for this transition should result in benefits both to the individual and to society.

One of the outstanding findings of this study is the impact a rural high school education had upon the internal, subjective feelings of the young men. Whether they remained in Eastern Kentucky or moved to urban centers, graduation from high school made a significant difference in how they perceived the world and in how they viewed their role in it. High school graduates, compared with school dropouts, in both rural and urban areas, revealed stronger subjective identifications with other people and looked forward to the future with greater confidence. While these young men are at an early stage of their careers, it is inferred that those who possess these inner resources will be more capable of sustaining themselves in a world of uncertainty and change. Rural school systems may pride themselves on this contribution.

The men in this study revealed strong beliefs in the value of formal education. Eighty percent of them said that, if they could start life over, they would make some changes, and the major change would be to get more formal education. This desire for more formal education on the part of the men may reflect their particular occupational and social experiences or it may reflect the general trend in American society Whichever is the case, it represents a vital need that should be met by the American school system. Whether a youth remains in a rural area or moves to an urban center, he will find higher educational requirements for entrance into most occupations. In addition, many occupations are undergoing rapid change, many are becoming obsolete, and many new ones are emerging—a fact of American society which points up the need for continual education. A recent report on rural youth careers concludes that failure to provide adequate educational facilities "contributes to losses to communities, states, and the nation in trained manpower, leadership, civic responsibility, incomes, and purchasing power. One consequence is a weakening of our country. The trained talents of youth are needed whether they are engaged in farming, agriculturally related work, or non-farm careers."[1]

The school dropout problem in the United States is extremely complicated and many factors are involved. One means of encouraging more rural youth to obtain a high school education, as well as some college education, is the establishment of more community colleges. A recent study in a Southern state documents the point that a community college tends to upgrade a community and to stimulate the educational aspirations of youth.[2] A community college offers a feasible goal to many youth who cannot afford to attend a college beyond commuting distance. As shown in Figure 1, most colleges and universities in Kentucky are located in the Central Bluegrass area of the state. The establishment of more community colleges in the eastern and western rural areas of the state will raise the educational level of Kentucky, will provide more rural youth with marketable skills and knowledge, and will contribute to the manpower needs of the nation.

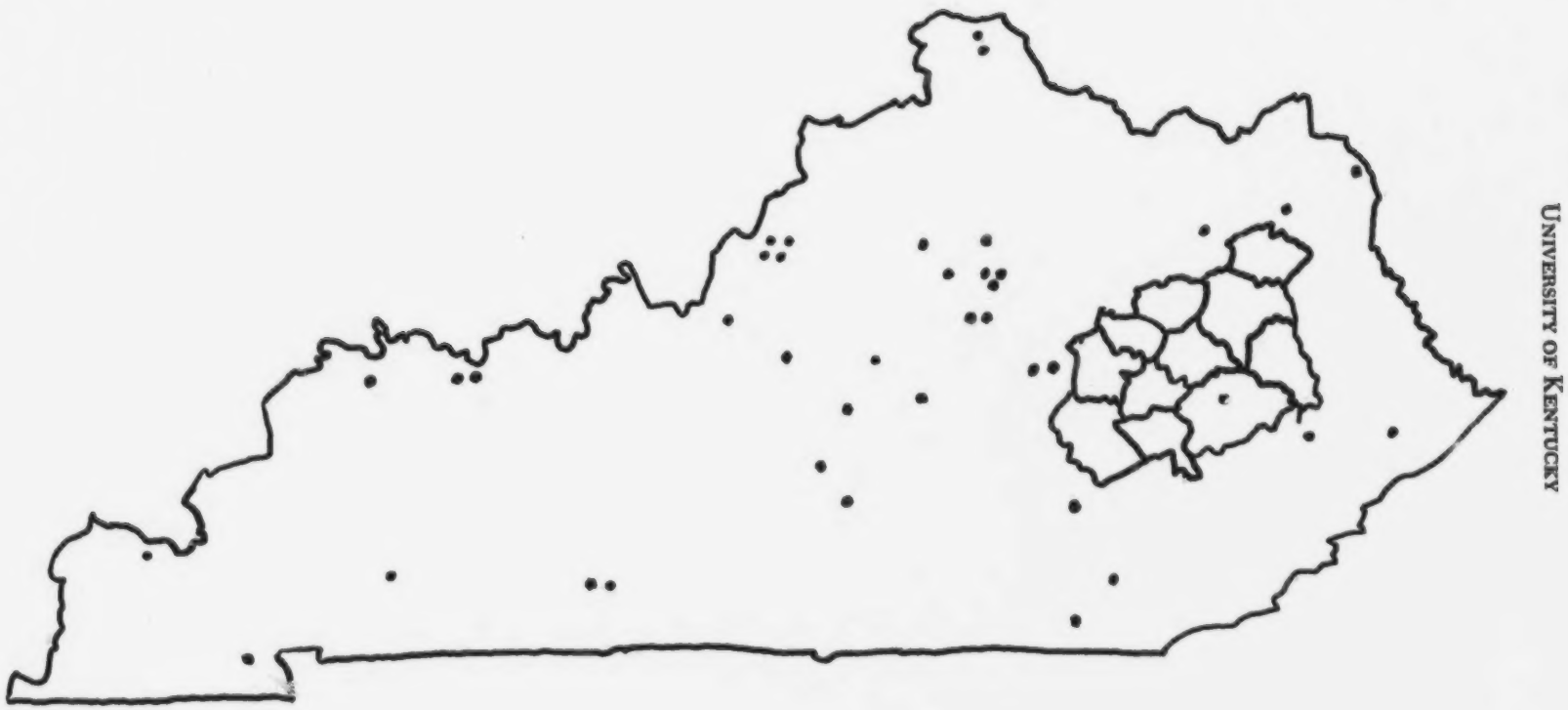

Fig. 1. Location of Colleges and Universities in the State of Kentucky and Study Counties

THE RURAL SCHOOL DROPOUT

A Ten-Year Follow-up Study of Eastern Kentucky Youth

E. Grant Youmans*

INTRODUCTION

Every society is faced with two basic problems. One is to organize itself to carry out its essential tasks. A second is to train and educate the young to perform these duties. If a society is to flourish and maintain itself, young persons must be equipped to fulfill responsible adult roles. In a stable, preindustrial society, the educational task is rather simple. Young persons must acquire the skills, habits, values, and attitudes which enable the society to replace itself. In contemporary, industrial America, the educational task is much more complicated. The young must be prepared to perform socially useful adult roles in a society undergoing rapid technological change. New occupations are emerging and existing ones are becoming obsolete at an increasing rate. Socially useful skills acquired with much effort and expense may be outdated in a few years. Young persons must be equipped psychologically to adjust to a changing society. Youths must acquire the perspectives, mental outlook, and inner resources capable of sustaining themselves in a world of change and uncertainty. Such an educational task places enormous responsibilities upon American educational systems.

Recently, public criticism of American educational programs has focused on the large number of boys and girls who drop out of school before completing the twelfth grade. Studies[3] have shown that the youth without a high school education is severely handicapped in his chances for achievement and accomplishment. He is often restricted to poorer paying occupations, his level of living is usually low, his functioning as citizen and parent is hampered, his knowledge and understanding of the world in which he lives is limited, and, in many cases, his orientation to life is one of

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* Social Science Analyst, Economic Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Harry K. Schwarzweller, University of Kentucky, was co-director of the survey. Acknowledgement is made to Martin J. Crowe, Dennis K. Dedrick and Azada B. Henry for assistance, and to Lee G. Burchinal and James D. Cowhig of the Economic Research Service for critical review of the manuscript.

defeatism and retreat. Most of the studies have focused primarily upon the out-of-school, unemployed youth in large city slum areas. Conant,[4] for example, has labelled this condition "social dynamite."

Relatively little attention has been directed to the problems associated with dropping out of school in rural areas of the United States. The difficulties of rural school dropouts are aggravated by two factors. (1) In many cases the formal schooling rural youths receive is below national standards.[5] (2) Large numbers of rural youths must move to urban centers to find employment. Reared in small villages and nonindustrial areas, rural youth may possess skills, knowledge, and values useful in their native environment but of little use in urban centers. As a result, rural youths who move to urban areas may be handicapped in competing with youths reared in urban centers.

This report examines the following questions: To what extent is the rural school dropout disadvantaged in comparison with the rural high school graduate? Is graduation from high school an advantage if the youth remains in a rural area? Is it an advantage if he moves to an urban center? Assessment of these questions is guided by two other questions. (1) How effectively have the youths used opportunities in their environments, as revealed in their work life, their economic conditions, and their community life? (2) How do the youths feel about themselves and about the world in which they live, as revealed in their aspirations, satisfactions, values, perspectives, and mental outlook? Since opportunities for youth in rural areas vary from those in urban centers, assessments are made in two ways: (1) the school dropouts in the rural area are compared with the high school graduates living in that area, and (2) the school dropouts who moved to urban centers are compared with the high school graduates who moved to those centers.

Procedures

The ideal population for the purposes of this study was rural young men who were old enough to be in the labor force and who had received varying amounts of formal education in rural schools. An approximation to this ideal population was attempted by defining a study population before drop-out rates become high and by attempting to locate the members of this population at some point after the customary age for high school graduation. The population selected was males who were enrolled in the eighth

grade during the school year 1949-1950 in eleven rural counties of Eastern Kentucky (Fig. 2). Efforts were made to locate these men 10 years following the year they were in the eighth grade.[6]

Of the 757 boys enrolled in the eighth grade in 1950, only 307 (41 percent) could be reached for personal interview. Five men were reported deceased, 4 were in penal institutions, 3 were in hospitals, 2 refused to be interviewed, and the remainder were living too far away for personal interview or could not be located. Each of the eleven counties in the study contributed a substantial number of respondents (the range was from a low of 28 percent for one county to a high of 58 percent for another). An additional 104 men responded to a mailed questionnaire. Since the mailed information was very limited and since a large proportion of the respondents were in the Armed Forces, the data are not included in this report. The population studied is thus neither representative of all rural youth nor of all rural men from Eastern Kentucky.[6] However, the data do show what has happened to 307 Eastern Kentucky men, and this information should be useful to government officials, school administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and others involved in youth development programs.

Description of Study Population

Characteristics of the study population are shown in Table 1. The educational level of the young men was low, as was that of their parents. Almost 90 percent of the parents had dropped out of school before completing the twelfth grade, and about 80 percent had received 8 years or less of formal schooling. More than half the young men (55 percent) had dropped out of school before finishing the twelfth grade and, among these, the larger proportion had received only eight years of formal education. Of those who finished high school, nearly one-third entered college, but only twelve men completed four years of higher education.

Many studies have shown that the educational level of parents is significantly related to the educational attainment of their children. The young men in this study are no exception. Both fathers and mothers of the high school graduates had received significantly more formal schooling than the fathers and mothers of the school dropouts.[7]

The fathers of the young men were engaged in a variety of occupations in Eastern Kentucky, the principal one being farm

Fig. 2. Location of Kentucky Counties in Follow-Up Study of Rural School Dropouts

operator or tenant (49 percent). Smaller proportions were in semi-skilled work (15 percent), in white-collar occupations (13 percent), in skilled work (8 percent), and in manual and service jobs (7 percent). No significant association was found between the status level of the fathers' occupations and the educational attainments of the young men.

Table 1.— Characteristics of 307 Men Who Were in the Eighth Grade in Eastern Kentucky in 1950, School Dropout and High School Graduate: 1960

Characteristic	School Dropout		High School Graduate		Total	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Formal Education						
A. 7-8 grades	96	57	....	....	96	31
B. High School, 9-11	72	43	....	....	72	23
C. High school graduate	....	....	97	70	97	32
D. College, 1-3	....	....	30	22	30	10
E. College graduate	....	....	12	8	12	4
Father's Education						
A. Less than 8 grades	83	50	39	28	122	40
B. 8 grades	64	38	64	46	128	42
C. High school, 9-11	4	2	14	10	18	6
D. High school graduate	4	2	7	5	11	4
E. College, 1-3	5	3	8	6	13	4
F. College graduate	2	1	3	2	5	1
G. Not reported	6	4	4	3	10	3
$X^2 = 19.70$; d.f. = 2; $P<.001$; rows CDEF combined and row G excluded.						
Mother's Education						
A. Less than 8 grades	60	36	37	27	97	32
B. 8 grades	81	48	56	40	137	44
C. High school, 9-11	17	10	25	18	42	14
D. High school graduate	3	2	13	9	16	5
E. College, 1-3	4	2	7	5	11	4
F. College graduate	....	....	1	1	1	a
G. Not reported	3	2	....	....	3	1
$X^2 = 14.84$; d.f. = 2; $P<.001$; rows CDEF combined and row G excluded.						
Father's Occupation						
A. Professional and managerial	13	8	15	11	28	9
B. Clerical and sales	5	3	7	5	12	4
C. Skilled worker	12	7	13	9	25	8
D. Semiskilled worker	23	14	22	16	45	15
E. Farm operator	82	49	67	48	149	49

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristic	School Dropout		High School Graduate		Total	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
F. Manual and service	16	10	6	4	22	7
G. No response	17	9	9	7	26	8
	$X^2 = 5.00$; d.f. = 5; P>.05; no response excluded.					
Place of Residence						
A. Eastern Kentucky	83	49	74	53	157	51
B. Other Kentucky	5	3	21	15	26	9
C. Southern Ohio	80	48	44	32	124	40
	$X^2 = .44$; d.f. = 1; P>.05; rows BC combined.					
Age						
A. 21-23	9	5	27	19	36	12
B. 24-25	99	59	83	60	182	59
C. 26-27	56	33	26	19	82	26
D. 28-29	3	2	2	1	5	2
E. No response	1	1	1	1	2	1
Marital Status						
A. Married	141	84	109	78	250	81
B. Not married	27	16	30	22	57	19
Military Service						
A. None	117	70	79	57	196	64
B. 1-18 months	5	3	4	3	9	3
C. 19-30 months	35	21	29	21	64	21
D. 31 months or more	11	6	27	19	38	12
Number of cases	(168)		(139)		(307)	

a Less than 0.05 percent.

The residential information about the study group revealed considerable movement between Eastern Kentucky and the urban centers of southern Ohio and Kentucky. At the time of interview, half the young men (51 percent) were living in the Eastern Kentucky area, and the remainder were living in urban centers of southern Ohio (40 percent) or other parts of Kentucky (9 percent). No significant association was found between educational level and movement out of Eastern Kentucky to urban centers. Approximately equal proportions of school dropouts and high school graduates were living in urban communities (51 and 47 percent, respectively). Many of the young men had lived for some time in an urban center but had returned to Eastern Kentucky. The

average (median) time away from Eastern Kentucky for the total group was almost 3 years. For the school dropouts the average was almost 4 years, and for the high school graduates less than 2 years.

The men interviewed were of an age to be fairly well established in their work and family careers. The average (median) age was 25 years. Four out of 5 were married, and almost all of these had one child or more. None of the young men reached for personal interview was serving in a military installation, but one-third had served in the Armed Forces.

WORK LIFE

The young men responded to a number of questions concerning their work life. They supplied information on their job achievements, job satisfactions, job aspirations, unemployment, and income.

Job Achievements

Job achievements of young men may be assessed in several ways. One is to compare their present occupational status with that of their fathers. A second is to compare young men's present occupational status with that of their first full-time job. A third is to compare the occupational status of young men with that of the labor force in the communities in which the young men live.

The jobs held by the respondents were classified according to a modified version of the Edwards Occupational Scale, which was designed to measure the status position of an occupation relative to other occupations. Since farms in Eastern Kentucky are primarily small-scale and of the subsistence type, the occupation of farming was classified low in status—below semiskilled work and above manual and service work. If the young man was unemployed, he was classified on the basis of his previous job.

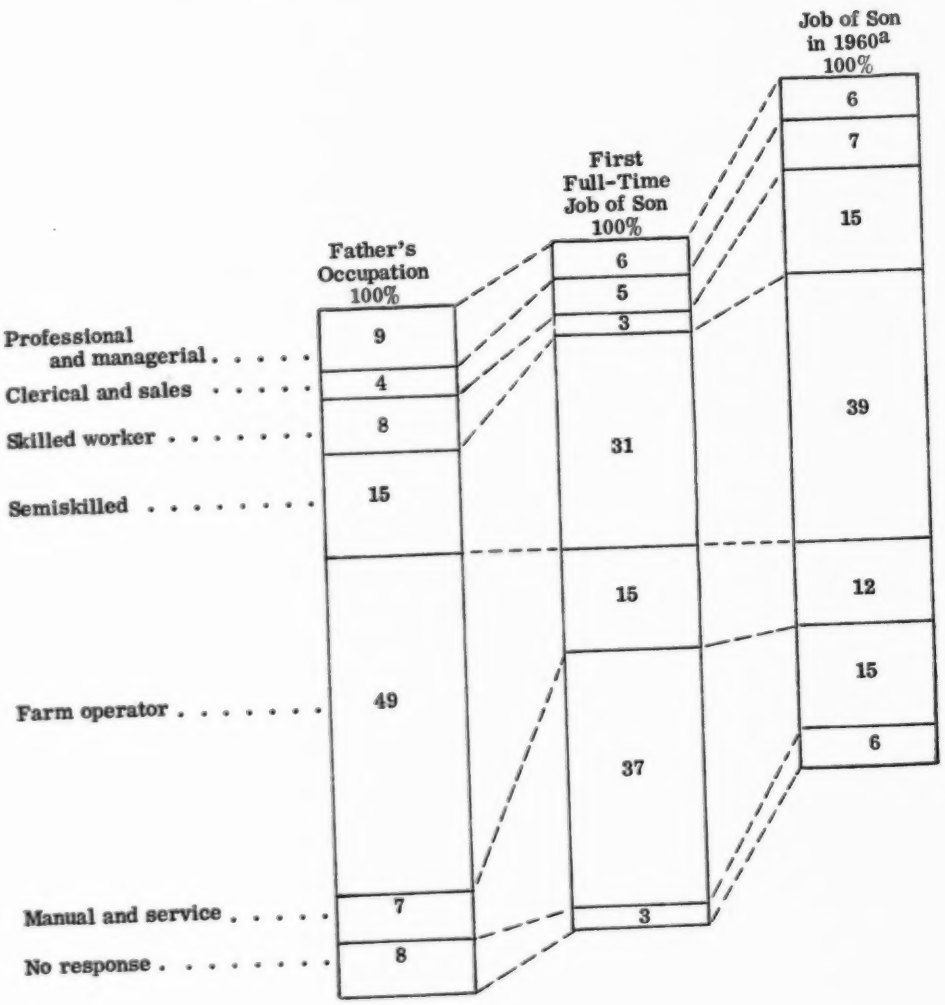
Relatively few of the young men were in white-collar jobs. Six percent of the job titles were classed as professional and managerial, and, among these, the most common position held was that of teacher (7 in number). Seven percent of the men were doing clerical or sales work in a wide assortment of situations. Fifteen percent were classed as skilled workers, and the most common skilled occupation was that of carpenter (10 in number). The largest proportion of men were employed as semiskilled work-

ers (39 percent). Twelve percent were farm operators and 15 percent were employed as manual and service workers.

Many of the young men studied were employed in jobs of higher status than their fathers. The principal differences between fathers and sons were in the farming and semiskilled occupational categories (Fig. 3). Substantially more of the fathers than of the sons were presently engaged in farming (49 and 12 percent, respectively), and substantially more of the sons than of the fathers were in semiskilled jobs (39 and 15 percent, respectively). Twice as many sons as fathers were skilled workers (15 and 8 percent, respectively) and manual and service workers (15 and 7 percent, respectively). Little difference was found between fathers and sons in the proportions engaged in white-collar work (professional, managerial, or clerical).

A substantial number of the young men had moved from their first full-time job to occupations of a higher status (Fig. 3). The most notable change was in the manual and service category. Whereas 37 percent did this work for their first full-time job, only 15 percent were presently engaged in this category of work. The proportions of young men in semiskilled work increased from 31 percent for their first full-time job to 39 percent for their present job, and in the skilled category from 3 percent to 15 percent. The proportions of young men in white-collar work and in farming changed very little from their first full-time job to their present job.

In Table 2 the occupational status of the young men is compared with the occupational status of the male labor force. The respondents living in Eastern Kentucky are compared with the male labor force in the 11 counties in which the young men received their schooling. Respondents living in urban centers are compared with the labor force in 10 counties of southern Ohio and in 2 counties of Kentucky to which the respondents had moved. In both comparisons significant differences were found. In Eastern Kentucky a larger proportion of the young men than of the male labor force were engaged in semiskilled work, and a slightly smaller proportion of the young men than of the male labor force were engaged in farming. Among the respondents who had moved to urban centers, the differences were more pronounced: Over half the young men did semiskilled work, compared with one-fifth for the male labor force; and only 13 percent of the respondents



[a]If unemployed, previous job was included.

Fig. 3. Father's and Son's Occupations

did white-collar work, compared with 38 percent for the male labor force.

As shown in Table 3, level of formal education was a significant factor in the over-all occupational achievement of the young men who lived in Eastern Kentucky, but not in the over-all occupational achievement of the young men living in urban centers. Nevertheless, among both the men living in Eastern Kentucky and among those living in urban centers, a larger proportion of high school graduates were in the higher status white-collar jobs.

Job Satisfactions

Two questions probed the respondents' reactions to their work. One question was: "How do you feel about your present job?" Each respondent was given four choices: "like very much," "like somewhat," "dislike somewhat," or "dislike very much." Eighty-three percent of the men said they liked their work, 5 percent said they disliked it, and 12 percent did not respond. No significant differences were found between school dropouts and high school graduates in liking or disliking their jobs, either among the men living in Eastern Kentucky or among the men in urban centers. The men who liked their work gave a variety of reasons for feeling as they did, such as: "the work was interesting," "good working conditions," "good pay and security," "sufficient independence in the work situation," "the work was not too difficult," "good opportunities for advancement," and "congenial co-workers." The men who disliked their work gave 49 reasons for feeling dissatisfied. These included such things as "poor working conditions," "low pay," "poor opportunities for advancement," "work was too hard," "too much pressure from above," and "the work was boring and dull."

A second question was worded: "If you had a chance, would you change to another job?" To this question, 50 percent replied "Yes," 38 replied "No," and 12 percent did not respond. No significant differences were found between school dropouts and high school graduates in their response to this question, either among the men living in Eastern Kentucky or among the men in urban centers. The men who wished to change jobs gave a number of reasons for wanting to do so, the chief reason being "pay and security." Other reasons given were opportunity for advancement,

Table 2.—Occupational Status of Study Group in Eastern Kentucky and in Urban Areas Compared With Total Male Labor Force in the Same Areas: 1960

Occupational Status	11 Rural Eastern Kentucky Counties				12 Predominantly Urban Counties			
	Male Labor Force[a]		Study Group in this Area		Male Labor Force[a,b]		Study Group in this Area	
	No.	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%
A. Professional and managerial	1,619	11	15	10	191,709	23	5	3
B. Clerical and sales	1,109	7	6	4	130,597	15	15	10
C. Skilled worker	2,103	14	19	12	173,974	20	27	18
D. Semiskilled worker	2,389	16	41	26	184,609	22	78	52
E. Farm operator	4,587	30	37	24	10,721	1	....	....
F. Manual and service	2,948	19	29	18	109,972	13	18	12
G. No response	431	3	10	6	52,851	6	7	5
Total	15,186	100	157	100	854,433	100	150	100
	$X^2 = 16.35$; d.f. = 5; $P<.01$; no response excluded.				$X^2 = 71.16$; d.f. = 4; $P<.001$; rows EF combined and no response excluded.			

[a] *U. S. Census of Population 1960, General Social and Economic Characteristics* PC (1) 19C, Kentucky, Table 84.
[b] *U. S. Census of Population 1960, General Social and Economic Characteristics,* PC (1) 37C, Ohio, Table 84.

Table 3.— Occupations of 307 Eastern Kentucky Males Who Were in the Eighth Grade in 1950, by Educational Level and Residence: 1960

Occupation[a]	Rural Eastern Kentucky				Urban Centers			
	School Dropout		High School Graduate		School Dropout		High School Graduate	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
A. Professional and managerial	1	1	14	19	4	4	2	3
B. Clerical and sales	1	1	5	7	4	5	11	17
C. Skilled worker	11	13	8	11	17	20	9	14
D. Semiskilled worker	24	29	17	22	45	53	33	51
E. Farm operator	24	29	13	18	....	....	....	....
F. Manual and service	18	22	11	15	12	14	6	9
G. No response	4	5	6	8	3	4	4	6
Total	83	100	74	100	85	100	65	100
	$X^2 = 10.28$; d.f. = 3; $P<.02$; rows ABC combined; no response excluded.				$X^2 = 7.13$; d.f. = 3; $P>.05$; rows AB and DE combined; no response excluded.			

[a] If unemployed, previous job was included.

more interesting work, and better working conditions. The men who did not wish to change jobs gave several reasons for wanting to stay on their present jobs. The most important reason was a general feeling of satisfaction with their work. Other reasons given were "good pay," "security in present job," "trained for the work," and "good working conditions."

Aspirations

Information about the aspirations of the young men was obtained from three types of questions. One type probed their general orientation to achievement. A second probed the kind of work they would like to do. A third probed what they were doing to achieve their aspirations.

Achievement Orientation. A large proportion of men had internalized the common beliefs of American society that any person with ambition, ability, and hard work can be a success in life. Eighty-five percent of the men agreed that "With effort and ability, any young man has the chance of becoming an outstanding success." The responses of the men to this question did not vary significantly with amount of formal education. Approximately equal proportions of school dropouts and of high school graduates, among men living in Eastern Kentucky and among the men who had moved to urban centers, agreed that "With effort and ability, any young man has the chance of becoming an outstanding success."

Job Aspirations. The men were asked: "If you had your choice, what type of work would you really like to do?" Responses to this question, it is inferred, reflect the occupational aspirations of the men.

The status levels of the jobs the men "would really like to do" were, in descending order of frequency, semiskilled work (29 percent), professional and managerial work (21 percent), skilled work (15 percent), farm operator (12 percent), clerical and sales (4 percent) and manual and service (4 percent). Fifteen percent of the men did not respond to the question. Level of education was a significant factor in the job aspirations of the men living in Eastern Kentucky. For example, 33 percent of the high school graduates living in the rural area aspired to the higher status white-collar jobs, but only 11 percent of the school dropouts in that area stated such aspirations. Among the men who had

moved to urban centers, however, level of formal education was not a significant factor in their job aspirations. While a slightly larger percentage of the high school graduates than of the school dropouts in the urban centers aspired to the higher status white-collar jobs (36 and 24 percent, respectively), the difference was not statistically significant.

In the total sample of men, significant differences were found between their present job statuses and their job aspirations, as shown in Table 4. Almost a third (31 percent) aspired to jobs of higher status than their present jobs. Forty-three percent aspired to jobs of the same status level, 10 percent to jobs of lower status, and 16 percent did not state their job aspirations. Since the white-collar classification includes professional, managerial, clerical, and sales workers, these workers could not elect a higher category. However, among the white-collar workers a sizeable proportion (17 percent) aspired to jobs of lower status. Almost half the men doing skilled work wanted to remain in that category of work, and only slightly more than a fourth aspired to do white-collar work. Two-fifths of the semiskilled workers were content to continue with that class of work; only 18 percent aspired to white-collar jobs, and 8 percent wanted to become skilled workers. Half the farm operators wanted to continue farming, 22 percent wanted to do semiskilled work, 8 percent wanted to do skilled work, and 5 percent wanted to become white-collar workers. The men doing manual and service work evidenced the greatest desire to move upward in occupational status. The largest proportion of these (34 percent) aspired to do semiskilled work.

Achieving Their Aspirations. The men were asked: "Are you doing anything to help yourself achieve your goals?" Thirty-six percent of the young men said they were doing something to achieve their occupational ambitions, 35 percent said they were doing nothing, and the remaining 29 percent did not respond to the question. Among those who were planning some steps to get ahead occupationally, the largest percentage (13 percent of the study group) said they expected to go to school. Smaller proportions said they were planning to take on-the-job training (8 percent), planning to do relevant part-time work (5 percent), saving money (3 percent), and "other steps" (7 percent). Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, educational level was a significant factor in their plans. A significantly larger proportion of

Table 4.— Occupational Aspirations of 307 Eastern Kentucky Males Who Were in the Eighth Grade in 1950, by Occupational Status: 1960

Occupational Aspirations	Occupation Status 1960[a]										Total	
	White Collar		Skilled Worker		Semi-Skilled Worker		Farm Operator		Manual and Service			
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
A. Higher status level	....	....	12	26	32	27	13	35	34	72	91	31
B. Same status level	26	63	22	48	50	42	19	51	8	17	125	43
C. Lower status level	7	17	8	17	13	11	....	....	....	....	28	10
D. Don't know	8	20	4	9	24	20	5	14	5	11	46	16
Total	41	100	46	100	119	100	37	100	47	100	290	100

$X^2 = 21.51$; d.f. = 4; $P<.001$; rows AB and CD combined.

[a] If unemployed, previous job was included, but 17 men did not give this information.

the high school graduates than of the school dropouts in the rural area said they were planning to do something to achieve their occupational ambitions (43 and 23 percent, respectively). Among the men who had moved to urban centers, no statistically significant difference was found between high school graduates and school dropouts in the proportions who said they were planning to do something to achieve their occupational aspirations (40 and 34 percent, respectively).

Unemployment

At the time of interview in 1960, 10 percent of the men interviewed reported they were employed, and this percentage was only slightly larger than the 8 percent rate for men aged 25 to 44 in Kentucky in 1960.[8] School dropouts did not differ significantly from high school graduates in unemployment, either in Eastern Kentucky or in the urban centers. Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, the rates of unemployment for the school dropouts and the high school graduates were 11 and 19 percent, respectively. Among the men living in urban centers the corresponding percentages were 2 and 8.

Income

The median gross income earned by the men in 1959 was $3,622. Almost a quarter of the men earned less than $2,000, and almost a third earned $5,000 or more. No significant differences were found between school dropouts and high school graduates in gross annual income, either among the men living in Eastern Kentucky or among the men who had moved to urban centers. Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, the median gross annual incomes of school dropouts and high school graduates were $2,100 and $2,625, respectively. Among the men living in urban centers, the corresponding averages were $5,203 and $4,964.

Many studies in the United States have shown that high school graduates earn more money than school dropouts. One hypothesis may be suggested to explain why the young men in this study do not conform to this general finding. The men in this study are in the early stages of their careers. The school dropouts had been in the labor force slightly longer than the high school graduates and probably had received some upgradings in income not yet earned by the high school graduates. If this hypothesis has merit, it would apply to the various occupations the young men

had entered. Specific occupational groups cannot be compared because of the small number of cases. However, the occupations of the young men were divided into two categories: (1) the higher status occupations of white-collar and skilled workers and (2) the lower status occupations which included the remainder. Amount of formal education was not a statistically significant factor in the gross annual incomes earned by the men in these two categories of occupations, either among the men living in Eastern Kentucky or among the men living in urban centers. It should be kept in mind that the men's incomes in 1960 may differ from those at a later date, and that over a longer period of time the high school graduates will probably earn more money than the school dropouts.

COMMUNITY LIFE

The men supplied three types of information relative to their community life: (1) their membership in community organizations, (2) their ratings of their communities, and (3) their migration intentions.

Membership in Community Organizations

The interviewers named 9 organizations commonly found in American communities, and the respondents indicated the ones in which they maintained membership. Three out of five young men were members in some formal organization in their communities. In descending order of frequency, the organizations in which they took part were labor union, church, farm organization, athletic team, lodge, veteran's organization, political organization, and civic group.

Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, level of education was a significant factor in membership in community organizations. Whereas 65 percent of these high school graduates were members of formal organizations, only 48 percent of the school dropouts in the rural area were members. Among the Eastern Kentucky residents, the most common type of organization to which the men belonged was the church.

Among the men who had moved to urban centers, level of education was not a significant factor in membership in formal organizations. Identical proportions (65 percent) of both school dropouts and high school graduates in the urban centers were members of community organizations. Among the men who had

moved to urban areas, the most common type of organization to which the men belonged was a labor union.

Community Ratings

The young men were asked to make four ratings of the communities in which they lived. On each rating they were given the choices of "good," "average," or "poor." In descending order of frequency, the men rated their respective communities "good" (1) as places to make many close friends (76 percent), (2) as places to live (68 percent), (3) as places to raise a family (64 percent), and (4) as places to find work (37 percent).

Level of education was not a significant factor in community ratings given by the men living in Eastern Kentucky, nor in community ratings given by the men living in urban centers. A pronounced difference was found between the men living in Eastern Kentucky and the men living in urban centers in rating their communities as places in which to find work. In Eastern Kentucky, 84 percent of the men rated their communities as poor places in which to find work, 10 percent rated their communities average, and 6 percent rated their communities as good. The respective ratings given by the men living in urban centers were 14 percent poor, 16 percent average, and 70 percent good.

Migration Intentions

Substantially more of the men who had moved to urban centers than of those living in Eastern Kentucky said they would like to move to some other places (55 and 27 percent, respectively). Level of formal education was not a significant factor in the men's desire to move, either among the men in Eastern Kentucky or among the men in urban centers. The men who wished to move gave a variety of reasons for wanting to do so, but these reasons were not significantly related to level of education, either among residents of Eastern Kentucky, or among those living in urban centers. The principal reason for moving given by Eastern Kentucky men was "better job opportunities." The principal reason for moving given by the men who had moved to urban centers was to return to Kentucky "because my home is there."

PERSPECTIVES

In the United States, it is generally recognized that the formal school system is expected to change the orientations, values, and

behavior of students. Attitudes and values of young people, acquired in the family and neighborhood, are changed by their school experiences. These modifications, it is assumed, will help young people perform responsible adult roles in society. Formal education, among other things, serves as a bridge between the family-oriented subculture and the larger society.[9] The present study supplies information about two types of perspectives held by the young men: (1) their feelings of pessimism about the world and their place in it and (2) their beliefs about the value of formal education.

Pessimism

The industrialization of the Western World has brought material benefits to millions of persons. The application of scientific methods to productive efforts has created an affluent society. As Erich Fromm points out, "Our scientific discoveries and technical achievement enable us to visualize the day when the table will be set for all who want to eat, a day when the human race will form a unified community and no longer live as separate entities."[10] Most thoughtful persons acclaim these benefits. Some students of society, on the other hand, point out a "seamy side" to this program. Elton Mayo maintains that "step by step with our economic progress there has been a destruction of individual significance in living for the majority of citizens."[11] Eric and Mary Josephson assert that our present age is characterized by pessimism, despair, and uncertainty, and that modern man is cut off or alienated from the world about him—from the technology that has transformed his environment, from his work and its products, from the community in which he lives, and, above all, from his own creative and productive potential.[12]

Srole[13] devised a set of five questions which attempt to measure the degree to which persons in American society feel pessimistic. These questions probe feelings of alienation and estrangement from others, confidence in community leaders, belief in the American creed of progress and achievement, and confidence in the future. For each question, the young men in this study stated whether they "agreed," "disagreed," or were "undecided." Their responses constituted a scale[14] from a low pessimism score of 5 to a high pessimism score of 15. As shown in Table 5, level of formal schooling was a significant factor in their pessimistic outlook. Among the young men living in Eastern Kentucky, and among

the men who had moved to urban centers, substantially more of the school dropouts than of the high school graduates scored high on the pessimism scale.

It appears that a very large proportion of the men in this study lacked confidence in support from others. Two-thirds of the men said they agreed with the statement, "These days a person doesn't really know whom he can count on," and this proportion was almost twice the proportion who agreed with any one of the other four statements in the pessimism scale. Among the men living in urban centers, school dropouts evidenced a much greater lack of confidence in others than did the high school graduates, and the difference between the two educational groups was greater on this statement than on any of the other four. Whereas 81 percent of the school dropouts in the urban centers agreed that "These days a person doesn't really know whom he can count on," only 55 percent of the high school graduates in the urban areas expressed agreement.

Table 5.— Pessimism Scores of 307 Eastern Kentucky Males Who Were in the Eighth Grade in 1950, by Educational Level and Residence: 1960

Pessimism Scores	Rural Eastern Kentucky				Urban Centers			
	School Dropout		High School Graduate		School Dropout		High School Graduate	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
High (12-15)	25	30	4	5	13	15	5	8
Middle (9-11)	31	38	29	39	38	45	20	31
Low (5-8)	26	32	41	56	34	40	40	61
Total	82[a]	100	74	100	85	100	65	100
	$X^2 = 18.36$; d.f. = 2; $P<.001$				$X^2 = 7.03$; d.f. = 2; $P<.05$			

[a] One person did not respond.

Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, in contrast, the school dropouts differed from the high school graduates chiefly in their lack of confidence in the future. Whereas 49 percent of the school dropouts in Eastern Kentucky agreed that "In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better," only 19 percent of the high school graduates living in the rural area expressed agreement. Whereas 31 percent of the school dropouts in rural Kentucky agreed that "It's hardly fair to bring children into the world the way things look for the

future," only 5 percent of high school graduates in the rural area said they agreed.

Educational Values

The average American boy spends a large proportion of his youth in the classrooms of American schools. It would be a serious condemnation of the American school system if during that period of time the impressionable youth did not accept and internalize the American faith in the value of formal education.

The men were asked two questions which probed their attitudes about formal education: (1) "How much schooling do you think a young man ought to have nowadays?" and (2) "If you could start life over, what would you do differently?" Responses to these two questions indicated that the men believed strongly in the value of formal education (Table 6). For example, in response to the first question, three-quarters of the men believed a young man nowadays should be a college graduate. In response to the second question, three-fifths of the men said that they could start life over they would get more formal education. Small percentages of men said they would study harder in school, learn a trade, save money, or postpone marriage. Only one in five said they would make no changes in their lives if they were to start life over.

Among the men living in Eastern Kentucky, school dropouts did not differ significantly from high school graduates in their estimation of how much schooling a young man ought to have nowadays. However, among the men who had moved to urban centers, the educational level of the men was a significant factor in estimations of the amount of education needed. Substantially more of the high school graduates than of the school dropouts in the urban centers said that a young man nowadays should be a college graduate.

Among both the men living in Eastern Kentucky and among the men in the urban centers, educational level was a significant factor in their desire to do things differently, if they could start life over. Substantially more of the school dropouts than of the high school graduates indicated they would make some changes. The principal change desired was to get more education.

Table 6.— Educational Values of 307 Eastern Kentucky Males Who Were in the Eighth Grade in 1950, by Educational Level and Residence: 1960

Educational Values	Rural Eastern Kentucky				Urban Centers			
	School Dropout		High School Graduate		School Dropout		High School Graduate	
I. How much schooling do you think a young man ought to have nowadays?	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%
A. Graduation from college	38	46	43	58	34	40	46	71
B. Some college	16	19	16	22	18	21	13	20
C. Graduation from high school	28	34	15	20	32	38	6	9
D. Some high school or less	1	1	....	....	1	1	....	....
Total	83	100	74	100	85	100	65	100
	$X^2 = 2.95$; d.f. = 2; P>.05; rows CD combined				$X^2 = 24.56$; d.f. = 2; P<fl001; rows CD combined			
II. If you could start life over, what would you do differently?								
A. Nothing	12	15	26	35	6	8	16	25
B. Get more education	67	81	26	35	67	80	30	46
C. Study harder in school	....	....	10	14	....	....	11	17
D. Learn a trade	....	....	1	1	3	3	1	1
E. Save money	1	1	....	....	3	3	....	....
F. Postpone marriage	....	....	1	1	3	3	....	....
G. Other	3	3	10	14	3	3	7	11
Total	83	100	74	100	85	100	65	100
	$X^2 = 34.70$; d.f. = 2; P<.001; rows CDEFG combined				$X^2 = 12.55$; d.f. = 2; P<.01; rows CDEFG combined			

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[1] Lee G. Burchinal, *Career Choices of Rural Youth in a Changing Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 458, November 1962), p. 26.

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[8] *Statistical Profiles*: Kentucky Rural Development Areas, SPB No. 12, July 1962, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

[9] H. K. Schwarzweller and J. S. Brown, "Education as a Cultural Bridge Between Eastern Kentucky and The Great Society," *Rural Sociology*, 27: 357-373.

[10] Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 1.

[11] Elton Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (Boston: Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1945), p. 8.

[12] Eric and Mary Josephson (editors), *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society* (New York: Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1962), pp. 10-11.

[13] Leo Srole, "Social Integration and Certain Corollaries: An Exploratory Study," *American Sociological Review*, 21 (1956), 709-716.

[14] The reproducibility of this scale was 90.4 percent. The five items in the scale were: (1) These days a person doesn't really know whom he can count on. (2) There is little use in writing public officials because they are not really interested in the problems of the average man. (3) In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better. (4) Nowadays a person has to live for today and let tomorrow take care of itself. (5) It's hardly fair to bring children into the world with the way things look for the future. Those who agreed scored 3, those undecided scored 2, and those who disagreed scored 1.